



## WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU

### FACT SHEET

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
445 12th STREET SW  
WASHINGTON DC 20554

PR5000

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## AIRCRAFT RADIO STATIONS

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, which became law on February 8, 1996, brought about fundamental changes in the licensing of aircraft radio stations. Aircraft radio stations include all types of radio transmitting equipment used aboard an aircraft, *e.g.*, two-way radiotelephones, radar, radionavigation equipment, and emergency locator transmitters (ELTs). The primary purpose of aircraft radio equipment is to ensure safety of aircraft in flight. This Fact Sheet provides a summary of the rule changes and gives guidance to commercial, as well as general aviation aircraft owners, concerning the licensing and operation of aircraft radio stations.

### **WHO NEEDS AN AIRCRAFT STATION LICENSE?**

On October 26, 1996, the FCC released a *Report and Order* in WT Docket No. 96-82, FCC 96-421, eliminating the individual licensing requirement for all aircraft operating domestically. This means that you do not need a license to operate a two-way VHF radio, radar, or ELT aboard aircraft operating domestically. All other aircraft radio stations must be licensed by the FCC either individually or by fleet.

### **WHICH AIRCRAFT ARE INCLUDED?**

The rule applies to all aircraft, including scheduled air carriers, air taxis, as well as general aviation aircraft, so long as they fly domestically.

### **WHAT IS DOMESTIC OPERATION?**

Aircraft operating domestically do not land in a foreign country or communicate via radio with foreign ground stations. Flying in international or foreign airspace is permitted, so long as the previous conditions are met. If you travel to a foreign destination, however, (*e.g.*, Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands) a license is required.

### **HOW DO I OBTAIN A LICENSE?**

Form 605 replaces three forms (Forms 404, 405B, and 900) previously used by Aircraft station applicants and licensees. Form 605 will be used for all Aircraft station licensing purposes including new station applications, license modifications, application amendments, license renewals, license cancellations, application withdrawals, requests for duplicate licenses, and administrative updates. For

instructions on filing Form 605 manually, refer to instructions included with the form. For information on how to file an FCC Form 605 electronically, visit the FCC's web site at <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>. The FCC will mail the license to you and it will be valid for ten years. You must keep a copy of your license with the aircraft's station records. Don't forget to sign and date your application and include any applicable fees, otherwise it may be returned.

### **RESTRICTED OPERATOR PERMIT**

At least one person on each aircraft flying or communicating internationally must have a Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit. This requirement is in addition to the requirement to have an aircraft radio station license for the aircraft. No Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit is required to operate VHF radio equipment on board an aircraft when that aircraft is flown domestically. You may obtain a Restricted Permit using FCC Form 753. No test is required to obtain this permit. The FCC will mail the permit to you and it will be valid for your lifetime. The fee for a Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit is in addition to any fee paid for an aircraft license.

### **MAY I OPERATE MY AIRCRAFT RADIO WHILE MY APPLICATIONS ARE BEING PROCESSED?**

You may operate your aircraft radio after you have mailed your application(s) to the FCC so long as you fill out, detach, and retain the temporary operating authority attached to the application form. The temporary operating authority is valid for 90 days after you mail your application to the FCC and should be kept with your station records until you

receive your license/permit through the mail.

### **HOW DO I MAKE CHANGES DURING MY LICENSE TERM?**

If you change the "N" number of your aircraft, you must notify the FCC in writing. There is no fee required. No action is required when you add or replace a transmitter that operates in the same frequency band.

If you change your licensee information (legal name, mailing address, etc.), you must submit FCC Form 605 for Administrative Update. There is no fee required for an Administrative Update.

#### Send your written notice of change or non-feeable FCC Form 605 to:

Federal Communications Commission  
1270 Fairfield Road  
Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245.

### **HOW DO I RENEW MY LICENSE?**

The FCC will send you a computer generated renewal reminder notice to the address in the FCC's database approximately 120 days prior to the expiration date of your license. You must file FCC Form 605 to renew your license.

If you send an application for renewal before your current license expires, you may continue to operate until the FCC acts on your application. You do not need a temporary permit but you should keep a copy of the renewal application you send the FCC.

☞ Note: You must stop transmitting as soon as your license expires, unless you have already sent your renewal application to the FCC.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF MY LICENSE HAS EXPIRED?**

If your station license has expired, you must submit FCC Form 605 for a NEW station license. There is NO grace period. You may use the temporary operating authority to operate your aircraft radio while your application is being processed.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I LOSE MY LICENSE OR PERMIT?**

If you lose your Aircraft license, you must request a duplicate by submitting FCC Form 605. There are no provisions for issuing duplicate restricted radiotelephone operator permits. If you need to replace a lost permit, you must apply for a new one using FCC Form 753. There are fees required for requesting a duplicate license or a new permit.

### **WHAT MUST I DO IF I SELL MY AIRCRAFT?**

If you sell your aircraft, you must notify the FCC by

submitting FCC Form 605. There is no fee required for cancellation.

#### Send your non-feeable FCC Form 605 to:

Federal Communications Commission  
1270 Fairfield Road  
Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245.

You cannot transfer your AIRCRAFT STATION LICENSE to another person or aircraft. The new owner cannot modify your license, but must apply for a NEW license.

If you have a RESTRICTED RADIOTELEPHONE OPERATOR PERMIT, you should retain it for future use since it is authorized for your lifetime.

### **HOW DO I LICENSE A FLEET OF AIRCRAFT?**

Under certain conditions, two or more aircraft having a common owner or operator may be issued a fleet license for operation of all aircraft radio stations aboard the aircraft in the fleet. This allows an applicant to file a single FCC Form 605 for multiple aircraft. The total fee due for the fleet license, however, is the fee due for a single license multiplied by the total number of aircraft in the fleet. You must retain a copy of the fleet license with the station records of each aircraft.

### **MAY I USE MY HAND-HELD AIRCRAFT VHF RADIO ON LAND?**

You may only use your hand-held aircraft VHF radio from your aircraft, or under the authority of an FCC ground station authorization. Ground station authorizations are usually only issued to aviation service organizations located on airports, businesses engaged in pilot training, aircraft manufacturers, or persons engaged in chase-car activities related to soaring and ballooning.

### **EMERGENCY AND DISTRESS**

The frequency 121.5 MHz is the international simplex channel for use by aircraft in distress or emergency. It is assigned only in combination with other operational frequencies. The frequency 243 MHz is available to survival craft stations and emergency locator transmitters which are also equipped to transmit on 121.5 MHz.

### **INTERNATIONAL OPERATION**

Stations aboard aircraft flying outside U.S. territory may communicate with foreign ground stations using frequencies that are not specified on their FCC station license. Aircraft radio operators on international flights should be aware of the requirements of foreign administrations.

## EQUIPMENT

Radio transmitters to be used in aircraft must be type accepted in accordance with Part 87 of the Commission's Rules except that radio transmitters to be used in conjunction with aeronautical public service frequencies must be type accepted in accordance with Part 80.

Licensees are authorized to make routine tests of their station equipment when required for proper maintenance, but precautions must be taken to avoid interference with any other station. The frequency 121.5 MHz may not be used for such a test.

## STATION OPERATION

The licensee of a radio station is responsible at all times for the proper operation of the station. Radio operators should use the following guidelines to make radio a useful tool for safe and efficient flight:

~TUNE BOTH TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER  
TO THE CORRECT CHANNELS.

~BE SURE THE CHANNEL IS CLEAR BEFORE

~BE BRIEF. TRANSMIT ESSENTIAL

~SHORTEN OR ELIMINATE TEST CALLS ON

~IDENTIFY TRANSMISSIONS WITH FCC CALL

## FORMS

- FCC's Forms Distribution Center (800)418-3676.
- For downloading at <http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html>.
- FCC's Fax-On-Demand System by calling (202) 418-0177 from the handset of your fax machine. Follow the recorded instructions to have FCC Forms 605 or 753 sent directly to your fax machine.

## FEES

- WTB Fee Filing Guide at <http://www.fcc.gov/fees>.
- FCC's National Call Center 1-(888)225-5322.
- Fees Hotline (202) 418-0220.

## RULES

All details concerning radio service eligibility, application procedures, operating requirements, and equipment standards can be found in the FCC Rules. You are not required, however, to carry a copy of the rules.

Aviation Service Rules 47 C.F.R. Part 87  
Operator License Rules 47 C.F.R. Part 13

The rules are available for a fee from the ~~SMITHSONIAN~~ Printing Office at (202) 512-1803.

MESSAGES ONLY.

THE RAMP OR IN FLIGHT.

SIGN OR FAA "N" NUMBER.